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NOTES ON EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS.—No. 3.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN EGYPT:

Their Growth and Hindrances.

I. BYGONE INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR SURVIVALS;

II. THE NATIONAL AWAKENING;

III. EUROPEAN INTERVENTION;

IV. REFORMERS AND "REBELS."

BY

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London:
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WESTMINSTER, S.W.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

NOTES ON EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS.

THE first and second of this series of 'Notes,' entitled 'Lord Cromer's Supremacy' and 'Military Control in Egypt,' were issued in February and April last, and it was intended that these should be followed at short intervals by others. Immediately after the publication of the second, however, Lord Cromer unexpectedly resigned his office as British Agent and Consul-General in Cairo, and, in view of the appointment of a successor and a possible change in the line of policy adopted by that successor, or dictated to him by the home authorities, there were manifest reasons for delaying continuance of the series until time had been afforded for the indication of any such change of policy, and consequently until political work had been resumed after the summer vacation. In the altered circumstances that have thus arisen, the most pressing question now to be dealt with appears to be as to the propriety of according self-governing powers to the Egyptian people, and for an understanding of the present situation some acquaintance with the facts leading up to it is necessary. The following pages are, therefore, mainly historical, and introductory to a statement of 'The Case for Constitutional Reform in Egypt,' in the fourth 'Note,' which is issued concurrently with the present one.

H. R. F. B.

Broadway Chambers, Westminster,
30th November, 1907.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN EGYPT.

In the introductory portion of the Annual Report issued by him shortly before his retirement from the British Agency and Consul-Generalship in Egypt, the Earl of Cromer wrote:—

"It is difficult even for those who have an extensive knowledge of Egyptian affairs to differentiate the various currents of thought which, in one form or another, are moving in the direction of creating a local public opinion favourable to the entirely novel idea of Egyptian Nationalism. I say that the idea is entirely novel, for it has to be remembered that for centuries past the Egyptians have been a subject race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs from Arabia and Bagdad, Circassians, and, finally, Ottoman Turks have successively ruled over Egypt; but we have to go back to the doubtful and obscure precedent of Pharaonic times to find an epoch when possibly Egypt was ruled by Egyptians. Even now Egyptian Nationalism is a plant of exotic rather than of indigenous growth.....It has been evoked by the benefits which, with a rapidity probably unparalleled in history, have been conferred on the country by the introduction of Western civilisation at the hands of an alien race, and it is surely the irony of political destiny that that race, or the instruments through whom it has principally acted, should be represented as the principal obstacles to the realisation of schemes the conception of which is mainly due to their own action."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1907,' p. 3.)

In those sentences the most potent of the instruments of the alien race that has taken the lead in introducing Western civilisation into Egypt makes bold assumptions, one of which is at variance with facts, and another in defiance of political morality. It is not true that the idea of Egyptian Nationalism is entirely novel, and even now exotic rather than indigenous in its growth. Nor can it honestly be said that, because "the Egyptians have been a subject race for centuries past," therefore it is their duty to remain for ever a subject race, and the duty as well as the right of their present race of alien rulers to keep them in subjection. It may be, as Mr. Silva White points out, that, from the earliest times, "the favourable geographical position of Egypt and her natural resources as a granary, necessarily challenged the ambition and cupidity of nations seeking to establish political and commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean, and to command the trade routes to the East"—('The Expansion of Egypt, 1899,' p. 33). But, as attempt is made in the following pages to show national aspirations, of indigenous not of exotic origin and growth, had taken shape and substance in Egypt long before the British occupation, and were only prevented by that occupation and its

disgraceful preliminaries from resulting in the orderly and effective self-governing institutions that the Egyptians are still craving for and have been deprived of to this day.

I. Bygone Institutions and their Survivals.

From Pharaohs to Mamelukes.

Whatever may have been the political institutions existing under the Pharaohs, Egypt had been a Persian satrapy for two centuries when Alexander the Great prepared a way for the rule of the Ptolemies, extending from 323 to 30 B.C., and after that it was a Roman province until it became part of the Byzantine Empire early in the fourth Christian century, and so remained for some three hundred years. Each of these dominations in turn must have materially influenced the alternate growth and lessening of culture that had been vigorous in Egypt while savagery was rampant in Europe, and each may have introduced fresh elements into the indigenous population of the country ; but all such changes were superficial in comparison with the consequences of the Arab conquest, which, commencing about 640 A.D., and proceeding in continuous streams for several generations, was far more momentous to Egypt than was the Norman conquest, of later date, to England.

In spite of the skill and prowess, the religious fervour and the political acumen, which enabled the Arabs or Saracens to make themselves masters of nearly the whole of North Africa and much of Central Africa, and to obtain a footing and leave a mark in Spain and elsewhere in Europe as well, they failed in their repeated endeavours to get possession of Constantinople, and so to secure the predominance in the Moslem world which was afterwards acquired by the Ottomans. But in Egypt they more than held their ground through six centuries before, and nearly six centuries after, the establishment of the Mameluke dynasty in 1250, notwithstanding the fact that the country became a Turkish pashalik in 1517.

Mr. Edward Dicey thus sums up the scanty record of Turkish misrule and tyranny which survives :—

"The country was ruled in reality by the Mamelukes as independent chieftains, acknowledging in theory the suzerainty of the Sultan, but only recognising it in practice by the irregular payment of an intermittent tribute. When the Mamelukes were not quarrelling with their liege lord, they made war upon each other ; and it was by taking advantage of the intestine feuds, and their personal rivalries, that the Turkish pro-consuls contrived to maintain

their authority in such a way as to avoid giving mortal offence to the Sultan on the one hand, or to the Mamelukes on the other. The one aim and object of the pro-consuls was to extract, by any means in their power, during their precarious tenure of office, a sum sufficient to satisfy the exigencies of the Porte and to enrich themselves. If they failed to satisfy both the Porte and the Mamelukes, they disappeared, by violence or otherwise, and were seen no more. If they succeeded, they left Egypt men of wealth; and in this case they had every motive for not calling public attention to the incidents of the period during which their ill-gotten wealth had been acquired."—('The Story of the Khedivate,' 1902, p. 3.)

From Mohammed Ali to Ismail.

Notwithstanding all the obstacles put in its way by Mameluke oppressions and Turkish extortions, Arab culture, which had attained its highest stage in the Middle Ages, was upheld to a considerable extent throughout these inglorious centuries. The population at large seems, moreover, to have endured fewer hardships than befell it after the great initial duel for the possession of Egypt had been fought out under Bonaparte and Nelson, on behalf of France and England, between 1798 and 1806, and after Mohammed Ali, at first with English backing, and perforce with Turkish sanction, had set up the dominion that lasted from 1806 to 1849.

"Spoiling the Egyptians," though a game already more than two thousand years old, then began to be played more systematically and more profitably than ever before. The new Pasha of Egypt, an Albanian Mohammedan, delivered the country from the Mamelukes, and, in conquering the Sudan, gave immense impetus to the Central and East African slave-trade. But only a few favourites were, besides himself, enriched by his enterprises, and even his irrigation projects and the like, however beneficial in intention and in their ultimate results, added to the miseries of his down-trodden subjects. They were further harmful in preparing the way, between 1849 and 1879, for greater exploitations by foreigners and unscrupulous adventurers at home under—in succession—his feeble and evil-minded grandson Abbas I., his feebler but well-meaning son Said, and his other and abler grandson Ismail.

It was in Said's lifetime that M. de Lesseps, in 1856, obtained his first working concession for the construction of the Suez Canal, and that the ruinous policy of borrowing money through European usurers began, the first important loan being negotiated in 1862 by Messrs. Frühling & Goschen. That ruinous policy had reached its culmination,

and had ensured the political as well as the financial bankruptcy of Egypt, before Ismail Pasha, who had succeeeded to the Pashalik in 1863, to whose heirs the right of succession to his African pro-consulship had been ensured by an Imperial Firman in 1866, and who had been promoted by another Firman to the rank and title of Khedive in 1867, was deposed by yet another Firman thirteen years later.

As Ismail had bought the privileges conferred upon him by the Porte in 1866 and 1867 with a raising, at the cost of the Egyptian people, of the annual tribute sent to Constantinople from about £400,000 to about £750,000, it might have been supposed that, so long as the "unearned increment" was duly provided, Egypt would now be practically relieved from interference or dictation by the "Paramount Power." But Egypt is, notoriously, "the land of paradox," and Ismail Pasha's bargainings, instead of weakening, strengthened its bondage to the representatives of the Sultan, whose spiritual pretensions as Khalif it had never formally acknowledged, but whose temporal authority had been imposed upon it since 1517.

The supremacy of the Porte was chiefly maintained, of course, by the cleverness, when it showed itself, with which the Sultan or his representatives by turns really or ostensibly favoured the pashas, who were backed up in their persecutions of the people, and the people, who were backed up in their resentment of the pashas' oppressions; the one object consistently aimed at throughout being to bring in supplies to the imperial exchequer and to enhance as far as possible the imperial power and dignity. To this end the patronage accorded to religious and educational organisations enabled the mosques and universities to do more in enlightening and otherwise assisting large sections of the population than has generally been done by similar organisations in other Moslem communities. On the whole, however, and inevitably, the influence of the Porte, as the paramount despotism, in upholding the despotic projects of its satraps—whether Mamelukes or of the dynasty of Mohammed Ali—was baneful; and to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt was due the embarrassing complication of *imperia in imperio* incident to the Capitulations with twelve European Powers, as well as with the United States and Brazil, which became operative in the country as soon as it fell under the control of the Turks.

Ismail's Inheritance.

However serviceable, and even necessary, in the Middle Ages and down to present times, may have been the opportunity afforded by

these Capitulations for the official agents of civilised nations to protect not only their own countrymen, but also natives having a recognised claim to such protection, from the lawlessness and legalised wrongdoing of Egyptian rulers and their subjects, the fact of their being tolerated, and deemed to be beneficial, is in itself an evidence of the rottenness of the rule in vogue under Ismail Pasha, and his forerunners for centuries.

It is customary to abuse Ismail Pasha in unstinted terms, and much of the abuse may have been warranted. His career, according to Lord Milner, was "a carnival of extravagance and oppression."

Ismail's Traducers.

"No equally reckless prodigal ever possessed equally unlimited control of equally vast resources. He came to the throne at a moment when there seemed no limit to the potential wealth of Egypt. The whole land was his to do what he liked with. All the world was ready to lend him money to develop it. Moreover, Ismail combined in himself every quality, good as well as bad, that goes to make the ideal squanderer. Luxurious, voluptuous, ambitious, fond of display, devoid of principle, he was, at the same time, full of the most magnificent schemes for the material improvement of the country. Over and above the millions wasted in entertainments, in largess, in sensuality, in the erection of numerous palaces, structurally as rotten as they were æsthetically abominable, he threw away yet other millions upon a vast scheme of agricultural development, started with inadequate knowledge at inordinate cost."—('England in Egypt,' 1907, p. 176.)

Unjust and untrue as is much in that paragraph and others, much in the following is yet more ungenerous and misleading:—

"If the personality of Ismail was an essential factor in the ruin of his country, it needed a whole series of unfortunate conditions to render that personality as pernicious as it actually became. It needed a nation of submissive slaves, not only bereft of any vestige of liberal institutions, but devoid of the slightest spark of the spirit of liberty. It needed a bureaucracy, which it would have been hard to equal for its combination of cowardice and corruption. It needed the whole gang of swindlers—mostly European—by whom Ismail was surrounded, and to whom, with his phenominal incapacity to make a good bargain—strange characteristic in a man so radically dishonest—he fell an easy prey."—(*Ibid.*, p. 177.)

If the "swindlers"—some of them fathers or grandfathers of British peers and foreigners of high rank—were as base as Lord Milner here implies, neither Ismail's ruin nor Egypt's would have been as grave and disastrous as both were had the culprits not been encouraged and supported by European Governments. If Egyptian

bureaucrats were cowardly and corrupt, their worst misdeeds would probably not have been committed, had it not been for European prompting. If Egypt was without "a vestige of liberal institutions" when the European prompters and "swindlers" appeared on the scene, and if, when the British occupation of Egypt occurred some twenty years later, no sign was visible of "the slightest spark of the spirit of liberty," there had been in the interval, as we shall see, a remarkable upheaval of national opinion in favour of "liberal institutions" which European machinations had ruthlessly suppressed, and it was the flash of much more than a "spark of the spirit of liberty" which brought about the crisis that furnished excuse for the British occupation.

It ill becomes those who have profited by Ismail's faults and follies to throw on him all the blame for offences in which their and others' share was at least as great as his.

II. The National Awakening.

Apart from the very notable material advantages, commercial and industrial, which Egypt derived from the Suez Canal, and yet more from the irrigation and other public works incident to the economical developments promoted thereby, it also indirectly profited by the financial profligacy of Ismail and his forerunners. Not altogether without compensations were the cruelties resorted to in extorting from the natives, already impoverished and hardworking, both labour for carrying on the extravagant enterprises started by the Khedive and his partners or tempters and money for payment of the excessive interest imposed upon him by those partners and tempters.

Pioneers of Revolution.

It may be true that half a century ago Egypt enjoyed few if any "liberal institutions," and that there was little or no "spirit of liberty" abroad, but there was widespread resentment of the intolerable tyranny experienced not only by the fellaheen, who constitute the vast majority of the population and who appear to have been for the most part actual descendants of the oldest inhabitants known of in history, but also by what may be called its middle-class section—mainly the result of mixed unions, with a predominant strain of Arab blood, and contributed to by all other groups of colonists, earlier as well as later; Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Italian, Circassian, Albanian, Coptic, and what not. It was to appease such resentment that a land law, decreed by Said Pasha in 1858, secured, or at any rate pretended to secure, for the fellaheen protection of their freehold rights; and the unparalleled use made of the

corvée and the courbash inclined all right-thinking leaders of public opinion—in so far as any real public opinion had begun to take shape in Egypt—to consider the propriety of modifying, if not of abolishing, these time-honoured abuses.

The leaders of this opinion, whatever its strength and merit, were, of course, chiefly to be found in Cairo and Alexandria, wherein were collected, along with the alien adventurers and their dupes and tools, generally of mixed origin, many of the ablest and worthiest natives, attracted by European civilisation, whose influences can be beneficial as well as malign. In Cairo, too, at the university of El Azhar, the head quarters of Moslem education, they found, at any rate, germs of "liberal institutions," under the guidance of devout men like the Sheikh Jemal-ed-din and his disciple Mohammed Abdu, afterwards Grand Mufti of Egypt, who, in that capacity, had the unique honour of being praised both by Lord Cromer and by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. Of Jemal-ed-din Mr. Blunt tells us:—

The Sheikh Jemal-ed-din.

"An Afghan by birth, he had received his religious education at Bokhara, and in that remote region, and apparently without coming in contact with any teacher from the more civilised centres of Mohammedan thought, he had evolved from his own study and reflection the ideas which are now associated with his name. Hitherto all movements of religious reform in Sunnite Islam had followed the lines not of development, but of retrogression.....On the other hand, reformers there had been of a modern type recently, both in Turkey and Egypt, who had Europeanised the administration for political purposes, but these had introduced their changes as it were by violence, through decrees and approvals obtained by force from the unwilling Ulema, and with no serious attempt to reconcile them with the law of the Koran and the Traditions. The political reforms had been always imposed from above, not suggested from below, and had generally been condemned by respectable opinion. Jemal-ed-din's originality consisted in this, that he sought to convert the religious intellect of the countries where he preached to the necessity of reconsidering the whole Islamic position, and, instead of clinging to the past, of making an onward intellectual movement in harmony with modern knowledge. His intimate acquaintance with the Koran and the Traditions enabled him to show that, if rightly interpreted and checked the one by the other, the law of Islam was capable of the most liberal developments, and that hardly any beneficial change was in reality opposed to it.

"Having completed his studies in 1870, and being then about thirty-two years old, he passed through India to Bombay and joined the pilgrimage to

Mecca, and, this duty accomplished, he came to Cairo. He remained on this first visit no more than forty days in Egypt, but he had time to make acquaintance with certain of the Azhar students and to lay the foundations of the teaching he afterwards developed."—('Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt,' 1907, pp. 100, 101.)

Proceeding to Constantinople, his bold and eloquent preaching there soon led to his being denounced as "an atheist and a perverter of the law," and he was ordered to take shelter in Egypt.

"It was thus under the cloud of a religious persecution that he returned to Cairo, but not without having sown the seed of inquiry which was to mature some years later at Constantinople in the shape of a general demand from the Softas for constitutional reform. It was the religious part of the movement which was to culminate in the political revolution attempted by Midhat Pasha in 1876.

"At the Azhar, when he returned to Cairo in 1871, his reputation had, of course, preceded him, and, though Egypt was then in the darkest night of its religious unintelligence, for the moral corruption of the Government, especially in Ismail's reign, had infected all classes, and had extinguished every tradition of courage and independence among the Ulema, considerable curiosity was felt about him. The few friends he had made on the occasion of his first visit welcomed him, if not openly, in secret, and presently the wonderful fire of his zeal and conversation drew around him, as it had done at Constantinople, a group of young and enthusiastic followers. The most remarkable of these, his earliest disciples at the Azhar, were Sheikh Mohammed Abdu and Sheikh Ibrahim-el-Aghani, the well-known publicist. To these he was able to communicate without reserve his stores of varied knowledge, and he inspired them with his critical spirit and something of his courage. Courage, indeed, was needed for any man at Cairo to speak out. Ismail brooked no kind of opposition, and wielded power so absolute in the country that independent speech, almost independent whispering, had disappeared from men's mouths. It was only the fellaheen of the villages, already despoiled of all, that dared complain, or those in the city too poor to be of any political account. The highest religious authorities, as well as the highest officials, had long been silent about injustice, and had chosen their part of acquiescence, content so long as they could get their share, each one however small, of the general plunder. On this dark state of intellectual and moral things Jemal-ed-din's courageous teaching broke like an apparition of strange light, and his very courage for a while secured him a hearing undisturbed by admonition from the Government.....He was allowed during the whole of the remaining years of Ismail's reign to carry on his lectures, and it was only on Tewfik's accession and the establishment of the Anglo-French Condominium that he was arrested on an executive order, sent untried

to Alexandria, and summarily exiled. He had, however, already done his work, and at the time of which I am writing (1880), his principles of liberal reform upon a theological basis had so far prevailed at the Azhar that they had already been adopted by all that was intellectual there among the students. The reformer's mantle had fallen upon worthy shoulders."—(*Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.)

Of Jemal-ed-din's successors Mr. Blunt—who speaks from intimate personal acquaintance, dating from January, 1881, regards Mohammed Abdu—as the worthiest, and, in fact, "one of the best, and wisest, and most interesting of men." He adds :—

The Sheikh Mohammed Abdu.

"When I use these words it must not be thought that they are a light or exaggerated judgment. I base them on a knowledge of his character gained in a variety of circumstances on very difficult and trying occasions: first, as a religious teacher; next, as leader of a movement of social reform and as intellectual head of a political revolution; again, as prisoner in the hands of his enemies, as exile in various foreign lands, and for many years under police surveillance at Cairo when his exile had been annulled; lastly, by the strength of his intellect and his moral character, reasserting himself as a power in his own country, resuming his lectures at the Azhar, placed in the judicature, named Judge of Appeal, and finally Grand Mufti at Cairo, the highest religious and judicial position attainable in Egypt."—(*Ibid*, p. 105.)

Mohammed Abdu, some eight years younger than Jemal-ed-din, was about seventeen when Ismail Pasha's rule began, and, though for a long time he chiefly concerned himself with theological questions, his conviction that, as Mr. Blunt puts it, "what was needed for the Mohammedan body politic, was not merely reform, but a true religious reformation," necessarily brought him into touch with all the leading Egyptians who, whether or not themselves sufferers by the policy recklessly pursued by the Khedive, were intelligent enough and patriotic enough to seek guidance from him. There were evidently, throughout Ismail's Khedivate, in and out of Cairo, more such men than has generally been supposed, and the help rendered by them towards the building up of "liberal institutions" must not be ignored because much of it was crude and faulty.

Ismail Pasha's Promises.

Even Ismail himself might almost have been one of the number had not foreign tempters and his own weaknesses led him into evil courses which caused Mohammed Abdu to describe him in 1882, as "the greatest enemy Egypt ever had." According to Mr. Edward Dicey :—

"The accession of Ismail Pasha was regarded in his own country, but still more abroad, as the advent of a new and a brighter era for Egypt. He was deemed, and rightly deemed, to be a man of exceptional ability; he was understood to possess unusual ability as an administrator; he was reported to entertain a high appreciation of Western civilisation, and to be wishful of introducing European reforms into Egypt, in as far as their introduction was consistent with Oriental ideas.....He had sufficient intelligence to realise that the State should be sufficiently well administered to promote its productiveness.....He was desirous, not only as a matter of policy, but of individual predilection, to stand well in the public opinion of Europe; and all these motives confirmed his wish to earn the repute of an enlightened sovereign, whose rule, however autocratic, was directed to the development and improvement of the country over which he had been called to reign." —('The Story of the Khedivate,' 1902, pp. 51, 52.)

It was in keeping with that character that, in November, 1866, Ismail issued a decree appointing, and fixing the powers of, a Chamber of Notables or Deputies, to sit at Cairo whenever and so long as its services might be required. Some of the rules laid down for the management of this body were promising. For instance:—

The 1866 Chamber of Notables.

"It shall be the duty of the Chamber of Deputies to discuss all that has reference to the internal administration of the country, and all the measures which the Government considers as coming within the powers of the Chamber.....All questions relating to the administration of the country which shall have been discussed by the Chamber shall be submitted to the Privy Council, and shall then be examined by the Bureaux and Commissions dependent on the Chamber.....Every proposal which the Government shall deem it expedient to submit to the Chamber shall be read to it.....printed and distributed for examination by the different bureaux. The united bureaux are then to name, by secret voting, a committee of five members, and this committee shall be entrusted with the task of studying these proposals and of drawing up a report upon them.....On this report being presented to the Chamber, and read at the sitting, it shall be discussed, and every one shall give his opinion upon it.....The members will vote by ballot and by a majority of votes.....The Chamber must respect the opinion of the majority, and hear their observations." — (Parliamentary Papers, 'Egypt, No. 3, 1882,' pp. 41—48).

But this promise of parliamentary institutions was not kept, and the promise itself was delusive. The proposals as to election of members were farcical. Only after there had been six elections was it necessary that "the members should be bound to know how to read

and write," and after the tenth that "the electors would also have to know how to read and write." The President and Vice-President of the Chamber were to be nominees of the Khedive; and so, in effect, were all its seventy-five members. It resolved itself, in fact, into—and probably was never intended to be other than—merely a Chamber of Notables, as it was generally called, composed solely of the Khedive's favourites and supporters; and it appears to have only been convoked and then but rarely, when a pretence of national sanction was wanted for some exceptionally outrageous scheme of the Khedive's or his masters.' Nothing of much significance is recorded about it during the fifteen years before 2nd October, 1881, when Sir Edward Malet, as British Consul-General at Cairo, sent to Lord Granville the following report as to the course he and Mr. (afterwards Sir Auckland) Colvin, as British Financial Adviser, were following in their plans for the overthrow of Arabi and the National party that had arisen in the interval:—

"The next step to be taken was the convocation of the Chamber of Notables, and for the last two days rumours have been abroad that difficulties had supervened. It was well known that Sherif Pasha intended that the Chamber should be convened under the law of 1866, but it was stated that Arabi Bey was opposed to this, and insisted upon the adoption of a law giving a much wider scope to the powers of the Chamber which had been elaborated during the last days of the reign of Ismail Pasha. It appears that this law had never received the Khedive's sanction, but had been prepared by the Chamber under his auspices and under the Ministry of Sherif Pasha.

"Here was a new difficulty. It was clear that Sherif Pasha could not give way on such a point. Should he even, for other reasons, be willing to consent, the assembly of a Chamber to which are attached all the privileges of a Chamber in a Constitutional country would bring him into immediate conflict with the Sultan, who will not permit a Constitution in Egypt. But apart from this the further dictation of Arabi was fatal to Sherif's power.

"Arabi Bey, however, dined last night with one of the most influential of the Notables, Sultan Pasha, who undertook to endeavour to persuade him of the danger of the course he was pursuing. In this he seems for the present to have succeeded, and Arabi Bey has once more professed confidence in Sherif Pasha, and the intention to leave the matter entirely in his hands. How long he may remain in this mind is uncertain, and Mr. Colvin has urged Sherif Pasha to issue the decree convoking the Chamber with all possible dispatch."—(*Ibid.*, p. 49).

III. European Intervention.

To understand the full meaning of the cynical report just cited—but one among hundreds of the same sort—and also the conditions under which the national demand for such a Chamber of Deputies as Arabi insisted upon in 1881 arose, we must recall some events of the preceding dozen years or more.

Financial Dictation.

The loans negotiated by the Egyptian authorities through European bankers, for which a precedent was made in 1854, amounted to about £4,000,000 before Ismail's succession in 1863. In the twelve years ensuing the total of national indebtedness, for outlay neither authorised by the people nor in any way under their control, was increased by nearly £100,000,000; the sums raised in Europe exceeding £50,000,000, a floating debt of £26,000,000 secured by Treasury bonds having accumulated, loans for about £11,000,000 having been effected with private persons, and an aggregate exceeding £13,000,000 being made up of claims for work done, services rendered, and money advanced. This result—only a prelude to worse—was not reached without repeated protests and denunciations from the Porte, on the ground that its ownership of Egypt and the revenue appertaining to it therefrom were being imperilled by such wanton mortgaging. Ismail, however, had weakened the Porte's hold on Egypt—except as a fiction useful to the European Powers for diplomatic purposes—by his bargains with the Sultan in 1866 and 1867, and at this time it suited the European Powers, as patrons of the great financiers and adventurers in London, Paris, and elsewhere, to encourage, or at any rate to tolerate, the iniquitous folly by which the "gang of swindlers" to whom Lord Milner objects were enriched, by which less discreditable traders were assisted, and by which the Khedive's vices and hobbies were pandered to and some real improvements brought about in Egypt, at a cost of unspeakable misery to the great bulk of the population.

At length, in the interests of the bondholders, and apparently at the instigation of the Khedive, Mr. Stephen Cave was sent out in 1875 to inquire into the financial situation. His report made appalling disclosures as to the sufferings of the fellaheen resulting from the monstrous taxes imposed on them, as well as from "forced loans which the peasant cannot distinguish from taxes," from "special duties which lead to oppression and extortion," and from much else, the effect of

which was that nearly a third of the gross revenue of the country was swallowed up by interest at from 12 to 26 per cent. per annum on loans represented by but one, and that at the time a very questionable, asset. "For the present large amount of indebtedness," Mr. Cave reported, "there is absolutely nothing to show but the Suez Canal, the whole proceeds of the loans and floating debt having been absorbed in payment of interest and sinking funds, with the exception of the sum debited to that great work."*

Mr. Cave's hint that Egypt should be practically annexed by England, in order that its political advantage might be ensured and the investments of British speculators adequately protected, was not openly and completely acted upon. But the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal, carrying with them a controlling power in its administration, were promptly acquired by the British Government, and—International Courts for legally defining and upholding the "rights" of foreigners in Egypt having been formally instituted on 1st January, 1876—Mr. Cave's mission was followed by another, entrusted to Mr. (afterwards Sir C.) Rivers Wilson, which resulted in the establishment of the Caisse de la Dette in May, 1876, and by yet another, entrusted to Mr. (afterwards Viscount) Goschen and M. Joubert, of which the issue was the Dual Control set up in November of the same year, and, after suspension in December, 1878, revived in July, 1879, to be finally abolished in 1883.

These arrangements and re-arrangements only concern us here in so far as they indicate the progress of European meddling with Egyptian politics, the primary intention being to maintain and forward the interests of European financiers, but the methods pursued to that end being of such a sort that they led perforce to assertion of absolute control over the whole administration of the country by England and France, as joint champions of all bondholding interests, and ultimately to the fullest extent by England, not only as the most enterprising of the Powers concerned, but also as the one whose political stake in the business was supposed to be the largest.

The Khedive, at that time the recognised and autocratic

* The whole history of Egyptian dealings with European financiers, and the Governments backing them up, between 1862 and 1882, was summed up by Mr. Seymour Keay in an able pamphlet, consisting almost entirely of extracts from Blue books, which was published in the latter year, and entitled 'Spoiling the Egyptians: a Tale of Shame.' From this pamphlet several of the quotations given above are borrowed.

Ismail and his Controllers.

spokesman for Egypt in European diplomacy, was, it must be admitted, in the first instance responsible for the state of things thus brought about. It was by his reckless extravagance, and his yet more reckless folly in placing himself at the mercy of the money-lenders who pandered to it, that Egypt also was placed at their—and, consequently, at their champions'—mercy. With characteristic imprudence, in April, 1876, as soon as the purport of Mr. Cave's report was known, Ismail suspended payment of the interest due on the Treasury bonds issued in his name, being emboldened thereto by the fact that in the previous October a like course had been taken by the Ottoman Government, and that in the intervening half-year nothing effective had been done by the European Powers to enforce payment. He speedily discovered his blunder; but, with all his skilfulness in tactics of dishonesty, he could not repair the harm that he had done to himself, and, in attempting to do so by further sacrifice of the country's interests, he hastened his own downfall, besides seriously aggravating the difficulties to be overcome by his subjects before Egypt could obtain even such opportunities of political development as he had promised to it in 1866.

"Unofficial Assistance."

The arrangements arrived at in 1876 were more or less adhered to until 1882, some of them—notably those concerning the Caisse de la Dette—continuing in force to this day. Besides the French and English Controllers, the earliest of whom were M. de Blignières and Mr. Rivers Wilson, and the Commissioners of the Caisse de la Dette, on which Capt. Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer), was the first English representative, sundry other European officials were nominally in the employ and under the control of the Khedive, while Consuls and Consuls General, as previously, looked after European interests at large the British Consul General at that time being Mr. (afterwards Lord) Vivian, who succeeded Col. Stanton, and who was authorised, among his other functions, and while ostensibly debarred from dictatorial action, to give to the bondholders and their agents "such unofficial assistance as he properly could."

The sole object of the new machinery, and the strengthening of old machinery, it appears, was to secure revenue sufficient to pay the exorbitant interest claimed by the bondholders, and all the lavishly incurred expenses incident to collection and distribution of the money. In the summer of 1877, for instance—although he had

reported in the previous autumn that, in the levying of considerably over £2,000,000 for payment of the January coupon, "under the extreme pressure put upon the authorities, the taxes were being collected in some districts for six months in advance"—Lord Vivian confessed, with evident shame, to the pressure he put upon Ismail with a view to another £2,000,000 being provided in payment of the July coupon of the same year. At one interview, we are told, the Khedive, "while pleading the utter want of resources, frankly admitted that, in order to pay the coupon, the taxes were being collected for nine months, and in some cases even for a year, in advance." On being warned that any failure on his part would be "courting a serious danger," Ismail protested that "he had already given up everything to the bondholders, and he saw no possibility of offering creditors better terms without ruining his country, which was already overburdened." Lord Vivian's only answer to that apology was "that the creditors ought not to suffer for a deplorable state of things for which they were in no way responsible." There are tokens of an uneasy conscience, however, in a later dispatch, dated 12th July, 1877:—

"The money required (£2,074,975) was fully paid up yesterday. But I fear that these results may have been achieved at the expense of ruinous sacrifices to the peasantry, by forced sales of growing crops, and by collecting taxes in advance. All this must be wrung, in some shape or other, from a country already crushed by taxation. Meanwhile, I fear the European Administration may be unconsciously sanctioning the utter ruin of the peasant-creators of the wealth of the country, for which I hold that Englishmen are incurring a serious responsibility."—('Egypt, No. 4, 1879,' pp. 72-3.)

"Official Pressure."

The mischief and the misery increased with the efforts made, and only successful by means of monstrous cruelty, for the raising of money with which to pay each succeeding half-year's coupon, and by the end of 1877 the difficulties of collection had reached such a pitch that the British Government yielded to the Consul-General's repeated argument that "official pressure would have the greatest weight and authority with His Highness." Sanction was therefore given to abundant application of "official pressure," with the consequence that more harshness than ever was shown in the exactions resorted to in the interests of the bondholders, and, when it became manifest that, without some radical change in the machinery of government, no violence would suffice to keep up for long the supply of £2,000,000 every six months, steps began to be taken to bring about such a change.

In March, 1878, the Khedive was coerced into appointing a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of six Europeans, under the presidency of Sir Rivers Wilson, to deal with "the whole financial situation of Egypt," and one of its earliest exploits was, in May, "a persistent attempt to seize the furniture in the Khedive's palace for a debt due to a European firm." Less undignified, but perhaps not less improper, seeing that the sole object aimed at was the gratification of the bondholders, were the wholesale seizure of two-thirds of the Crown lands and other measures as arbitrary, the carrying out of which was facilitated by the enforced resignation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice by Sherif Pasha—subsequently one of the British Government's principal and most trusted assistants in the administration of the country; the excuse being that Sherif, while declaring "his readiness to give written answers to any questions," had declined to make oral reply to "questions requiring great precision." "The prestige and authority of the Commission," Lord Vivian reported to Lord Salisbury, "will now be greatly enhanced by the fall of the most prominent man in Egypt for disobeying its summons." *

The Anglo-French Condominium.

The way was thus cleared for the crowning achievement of the Commissioners of Inquiry in compelling Ismail to sanction, as they put it in their report to Lord Salisbury, "the limitation of the absolute power which the Khedive has hitherto wielded," and to adopt the policy indicated or misstated in a letter dated 28th August, 1878, which Ismail addressed to Nubar Pasha, whom he had previously invited to return to office as Sherif Pasha's successor :—

"Instead of absolute personal rule, the principle on which the existing government of Egypt is based, I wish to have a personal rule which will direct the general course of public affairs, but which will be counterbalanced by a Council of Ministers. In one word, I wish to rule henceforth with and by my Council of Ministers. In order to carry out this idea, I consider that, for the execution of the reforms I have already announced, the members of the Ministry must be jointly and severally responsible for one another. This point is essential. The Council of Ministers will discuss in common all important measures affecting the country. The opinion of the majority will determine the opinion of the minority. All Ministerial decisions will, therefore, be taken by the vote of the majority of the Ministry, and, by giving my approval, I shall sanction in consequence the opinions which have

* The above and later details are culled from the Official Correspondence in 'Egypt, No. 4, 1879.'

carried the day. Each Minister, therefore, will have to carry into execution the decisions of the Council which have received my approval, and which concern the special department entrusted to his care.....I consider that the appointment of a Ministry possessing these attributes is not incompatible with our customs and ideas, and is, on the contrary, in accordance with the precepts of the Sacred Law, and consistent with an organised judicial system. The institution, therefore, will be sufficient to meet the exigencies of our social system, and will permit us to realise our expressed intentions."

This project was specious. Under honest guidance and other favourable conditions it might have been a starting point for the liberal political institutions of which Egypt had so long been in sore need. But, from the first, it was only a sham, and worse. Nubar Pasha being designated as Prime Minister, Sir Rivers Wilson, without resigning his English Controllership, "consented" to be Finance Minister, on condition that he was to have "full and uncontrolled authority over every official under his orders, including the power of appointment and dismissal," and a similar stipulation was made by M. de Blignières, the French Controller, who was proposed as Minister of Public Works. The scheme was thus merely a reshaping and strengthening, in the guise of an Anglo-French Ministry, of the Dual Control—reminding us of Milton's statement that "new Presbyter is but old Priest writ large"; and it is not strange that, immediately after Sir Rivers Wilson's visit to England in the autumn of 1878, the Rothschilds easily floated a further loan of £8,000,000 on security of the Domain lands, and that the British Consul General at Cairo cheerfully reported that "Egyptian Stock has risen rapidly since the news of the arrangement became known."

Six weeks later, on 14th December, Lord Vivian, in accordance with his instructions from Lord Salisbury, had an interview with the Khedive, of which he duly reported as follows:—

"I said I had been instructed to inform His Highness.....that Her Majesty's Government had every confidence in the resources of Egypt, and in the successful working out of the new system, if it were only allowed a fair trial, but if it were opposed by those in power, or if they showed any disposition to discredit it, the difficulties of the new Administration would be enormously increased, and any responsibilities for their failure would involve its authors (whoever they might be) in the disastrous consequences that must result therefrom; and that both the British and French Governments earnestly desired to see the establish-

Ismail's Dilemma.

ment of a stable Government and sound Administration in Egypt, and relied upon the Khedive's steady support to the endeavours of Nubar Pasha and his colleagues to re-establish the financial credit of the country. Such a result, I said, would tend more than anything else to strengthen the position of His Highness and his dynasty; but a contrary result might seriously compromise their position.

"The Khedive listened to me most attentively, and, when I had finished, said, with evident signs of great annoyance, that it was one of the most serious and painful communications he had ever received from Her Majesty's Government, and that he regretted greatly that they should have thought it necessary to use language to him which he thought was undeserved and unjust. Hitherto, the advice given to him by Her Majesty's Government had always been dictated by evident 'benevolence' for himself and his dynasty, but now it seemed as if they had taken a 'parti-pris' against him.

"Moreover, the responsibility they sought to cast upon him for the successful result of the new order of things, and for the due entry of the taxes, was neither logical nor just, and he must entirely disclaim it. What was his present position in Egypt? He had surrendered his personal property and his personal power, and deliberately accepted the position of a constitutional prince; a responsible Ministry had been formed to advise him, and, if he rightly understood the first principle of constitutional government, it was that the Ministers, and not the Chief of the State, were made responsible under such circumstances; while, as to the entry of the taxes, he had no control or power over it, and therefore could not be held responsible for it.

"He must decline to meddle with the proper functions of his Ministers. His advice or opinion was entirely at their disposal if they chose to ask him for it, but he could not thrust it upon them unasked, and, although he quite understood that he was the person principally interested in the successful working of the new scheme, he could not interfere with the attributes of his Ministers. If they were not responsible for their own acts, what was the meaning of a responsible Ministry? Responsibility, he thought, could only attach to him if he attempted to interfere improperly in the government of the country; otherwise he must entirely disclaim it.

"I replied that.....His Highnsss must remember that, although he had surrendered his personal power and a constitutional régime was established in Egypt, the new order of things was in its infancy, and it was rather too early for the strict application of the doctrines of constitutional government as understood in Europe. His Highness had still all the prestige and influence of the Chief of an Eastern State, combined with greater knowledge and experience of Egypt than that of any other person."—('Egypt, No. 5, 1879,' p. 3.)

However numerous and outrageous may have been Ismail Pasha's faults, no impartial person can fail to commiserate with him in the treatment to which he was here subjected, or deny that his attitude was more dignified than that of his persecutors. The British Government and its agents on the spot had brought themselves into a position humiliating indeed—though they may have been themselves almost unconscious of it—when they called upon the Khedive to make himself their tool in continuing as many as they chose of his old malpractices, on the ground that it was "rather too early" for fulfilment of the promises made by them as regards constitutional government, but warned him that, while they alone were to profit by any success attending his work, he alone would incur all the disgrace incident to it, and that, if their plans failed, all the blame for that failure would be thrown upon him.

The 1879 Chamber of Notables.

It was probably as the result of a compromise with his "controllers," but in the hope of weakening their hold on him, that Ismail consented to assist in further money-raising, and made a pretence of seeking support from influential natives for the fresh taxation called for, by reviving an abortive project of thirteeen years before. "The Chamber of Notables, consisting of native delegates elected from the various provinces," Lord Vivian reported on 3rd January, 1879, "has been specially convoked by the Khedive for the consideration of certain important financial proposals;.....I believe the principal object is to propose the increase of the 'Okuri' land tax or 'dime,' by which the richer class of proprietors are assessed at rates below the present value of their land, which has been much improved by cultivation." The reason for this desperate measure Lord Vivian stated five days later in another letter:—

"With an empty Treasury chest and a ghastly amount of debt, heavy demands impending, a serious deficit on the year, and taxes coming in very slowly, the prospect is anything but hopeful; and, with no wish to be a pessimist, I confess to very grave doubts whether the utmost financial skill can enable the country, at least for the moment, to meet all its engagements in full, which, as I have often reported, it has only done hitherto by ruinous expedients that can no longer be resorted to under a reformed Administration."—(*Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.)

The Chamber of Notables, whose "election," if more than nominal, could not possibly in the time have been obtained by any representative process, was opened on 2nd January "by the Khedive in person, in the presence of all his Ministers," that is, with the public sanction of

Sir Rivers Wilson and his European associates ; but it promptly showed itself more restive than its promoters seem to have expected. More than that, the sudden calling together of a bogus Parliament gave occasion for, and impetus to, a really popular, and in a sense national, movement which was still less expected. On 11th January, Lord Vivian wrote :—

"There is a certain amount of fermentation in the country, as evidenced by the arrival of large deputations of sheikhs from the provinces, to protest against any pressure for the payment of taxes at this moment, and I am told that there is a probability of opposition in the Chamber of Notables to the proposition that is to be submitted to them by the Government for an increase of the 'Okuri' tax, which falls especially upon the richer class of proprietor. If this fermentation were natural, it would not be an unhealthy symptom, but I have good reason to suspect that it has been secretly fomented by agents, probably employed by the Khedive, and I hear from a reliable source that the leading men of the Chamber of Notables have been secretly convoked and told that the Khedive would not be displeased to see them oppose the measures of an Administration which was imposed upon him, and which was entirely in the hands of Europeans."—(*Ibid.*, p. 11.)*

European Provocations.

Whatever encouragement the Khedive may have given, secretly or openly, to the native malcontents, Lord Vivian had before long to admit that the popular indignation was less artificial, and even better grounded, than he had "suspected." Early in February he informed the British Government of an exceptionally discreditable device of its money-raising agents on the spot. This was a decree with reference to the "abadieh" lands, which, as Lord Vivian explained, were "privileged land tenements," formerly uncultivated, and consequently "only liable to payment of the tithe, the cultivators residing on the property being also exempt from the corvée." "This privilege," he added, "naturally attracted the fellahs of the neighbouring lands, who, in order to escape

* The next sentence in Lord Vivian's letter so grotesquely illustrates the self-deception or hypocrisy more plentiful and offensive in the Egyptian Blue-books than perhaps, in any others that it may here be quoted : "Thus, in addition to their serious financial difficulties, and to the task of attempting to create order out of chaos, the new Ministry have to struggle not only with open enemies, but with internal treachery of the most dangerous description, carried on in spite of serious warning ; they can only hope to succeed under such circumstances by showing a bold and thoroughly united front ; by a courageous and vigorous policy, eschewing all shifts or expedients ; and by the strong support of the English and French Governments."

the corvée, squatted in large numbers on the various 'abadiehs,' and it is with the object of checking this abuse that the present decree has been enacted"; its philanthropy having the effect of "extending to cultivators of the 'abadieh' lands the liability to forced labour for works of public utility, but enabling them to purchase exemption from personal service by the payment of a sum of money representing the value of the number of days' labour for which they would be liable." In other words, the fellaheen who had hitherto found exemption from slavery in these uncultivated "abadieh" lands, which to them were "cities of refuge," were made liable to the corvée, unless they were rich enough to pay an equivalent for it.

Yet more provocative of public indignation, seeing that it affected a higher grade of the population and involved wider interests, was the arbitrary treatment of the Egyptian army, which led to much besides what Lord Vivian called "a serious military riot" on the 18th and 19th February, 1879, and of which he reported as follows on the 20th :—

"I had of late received several warnings that serious discontent had been created in the army by some recent Government measures of economy, and particularly by the compulsory retirement on half-pay of about 2,500 officers, who were owed heavy arrears of pay which were not liquidated when they were sent away, the sufferers being thus left in great distress, and many of them in a state of destitution. I was, therefore, prepared for an outbreak; but at length I became so convinced of the imminence of the danger that I had an audience of the Khedive, and officially called upon him to take immediate measures, if possible, to redress the evil, and in any case to repress disorder, for which I held him responsible as Chief of the State.....

"The Ministers seem not to have realised the gravity of the position, for on the 17th, the day before the outbreak took place, Mr. Wilson, in a long conversation with Mr. Baring and myself upon the position of affairs, refused to admit the probability of any such danger as I anticipated, or the existence of any serious discontent, and evidently considered me an alarmist; while actually only half an hour before the outbreak occurred the Minister of the Interior came to call upon me, and ridiculed the idea of its possibility. However, on Tuesday, the 18th instant, at about noon, I received two messages in quick succession that Nubar Pasha and Mr. Rivers Wilson had been mobbed by a crowd of officers armed with swords, taken out of their carriage, and dragged off to the Ministry of Finance, where they were shut in by the rioters, who had cut the telegraph wires. I immediately galloped off to the Palace and informed the Khedive, urging him to repair to the spot at once."

This Ismail did, and by his influence order was soon and easily restored, except that the turmoil and some rowdyism continued for a day and a half. "But for the Khedive's presence," said Lord Vivian, "the affair might have taken much more serious proportions," and he deplored "the resumption by the Khedive, under the force of circumstances and for the protection of public order, of no small portion of the power which it was hoped had been wrung from him for ever." To Lord Vivian's chagrin, when he and the other consuls went to accord formal and grudging thanks to Ismail for his assistance :—

Ismail's Defiance.

"He begged us plainly to inform our Governments that he could no longer accept the position in which it had been sought to place him, of great responsibility, without any corresponding power or authority. The present outbreak, of which he, the Chief of the State, had received no notice or warning whatever except through me, and which could never have occurred had he been kept properly informed or been faithfully served, showed how his authority had been sapped and undermined. He left us to say, from what we had seen that morning, whether any other sufficient authority had been put in its place. He referred to the serious and growing discontent in Upper Egypt, and to the disorganisation of all authority throughout the country, and he distinctly warned us that, unless his position was changed, and his proper share in the government restored to him, he would not be answerable for the consequences. As I was leaving the room he added to me that he could not retain Nubar Pasha in his service after what had happened."—(*Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27.)

Nubar Pasha was accordingly dismissed by the Khedive, and the British agents in Egypt, while protesting against this as well as other assertions of his independence, did not venture to insist upon the reinstatement of the wily politician who had, for the time, thrown in his lot with them. But the discreditable and unprofitable quarrellings and plottings that ensued only hastened the overthrow of Ismail and his replacement by his son Tewfik, which took effect on 26th June.

In the interval, at the instigation of Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, the Chamber of Notables had been summarily dissolved, and, in retaliation for this arbitrary proceeding, a new Egyptian Ministry had, on 8th April, been formed, with Sherif Pasha as President of the Council and Prime Minister, and two natives as substitutes for the British and French Controllers. At a memorable meeting of the European consuls, summoned to the Palace on the following day, the

Nationalist Developments.

Khedive pointed out that this course was rendered necessary by the popular demand for "a purely Egyptian Ministry, which would be responsible to the Chamber of Deputies, in the mode of election of which certain modification would be made." Sherif Pasha, moreover, stated that "His Highness had no choice but to follow the course of action he had adopted, in order to allay the discontent which, if it had been allowed to continue, would have led to disastrous consequences"; that "this discontent among all classes of the population arose, in the first instance, from the manner in which the Chamber of Deputies had been treated, and more especially by its sudden dismissal without ever having been consulted at all"; and that "the nation saw in this an insult to their representatives, and a very painful impression was produced."—(*Ibid.*, p. 85.)

There were, of course, other, and doubtless far more cogent reasons for Ismail's reckless defiance of his European controllers than the pressure put upon him by the advocates of Constitutional Reform in Egypt, and its Reform Party was, at that time, far weaker in itself, and much faultier in its information and ideals, than we are asked by a few enthusiasts to believe. But, unquestionably, in the year of Ismail's deposition and Tewfik's promotion to the Khedivate, there was a distinct and important outburst of Egyptian Nationalism, the nature and value of which are described by Mr. Blunt in a passage which is substantially confirmed by official records :—

"It had its origin as a practical idea in the last desperate efforts made by the Khedive Ismail, when he had quarrelled with Wilson, to maintain himself in power against the consular tutelage in which he had, by his folly and his debts, placed himself. He sought to recover the moral status he had lost and the goodwill of his subjects by making to them an appeal for support, and in the spring of 1879 he proclaimed his intention of calling together an Assembly of Notables. There is little doubt that his intention was, under the cloak of a national demand, to repudiate at least a portion of the debt, and though no one in Egypt, except, perhaps, certain European residents, thought him sincere, the idea of a constitutional form of government, as a remedy for the ills they were suffering, began at that time to be popularised at Cairo. Sheik Jemal-ed-din and his school had always maintained that the growing absolutism of Mohammedan princes in modern times was contrary to the spirit of Islam, which in its essence was a Republic, where every Moslem had the right of free speech in his assemblies, and where the authority of the ruler rested on his conformity to the law and on popular approval. Ismail was condemned by the Azhar reformers on the

double ground of his being a breaker of the law and a political tyrant. In the spring of 1879 it had been much discussed among them in private how, and by what means, he could be deposed, or even, if there were no other way, removed by assassination. It was the consciousness of his double peril, both at home and from Europe, and of the opinions held at Azhar, that determined him to appear as a Constitutionalist.

"Constitutionalism, it must moreover be remembered, was much in the air just then, not only in Egypt, but at Constantinople, where an assembly had met, convoked by a decree of the Sultan, only five years before. Little, therefore, as Ismail was trusted by the Reformers, his new move was one of which they could not but approve, and it was taken up and expounded by such printed organs of opinion as had furtively begun to be established at Cairo under their direction. Apart from the Azhar, there were not a few of the high officials who at this time were Constitutionalists, notably Sherif Pasha, Ali Pasha Mubarak, and Mahmud Bey Sami-el-Barodi. Nor was this all. The Khedive's heir apparent and eventual successor, Mohammed Tewfik, had come under Jemal-ed-din's potent influence, and through him was in close communication with the Reformers, and had given them repeated pledges that, if ever he came to the Khedivial throne, he would govern on strictly constitutional lines. Ismail's latest Ministry, which lasted three months, included Tewfik and Sherif, Constitutionalists both, and they were actually in charge of the Administration when the old Khedive was deposed.

"Tewfik's accession was, therefore, greeted by Jemal-ed-din and the Reformers as a stroke of good fortune, and, though they regretted that it had not been in the power of the Egyptians themselves to depose the tyrant, they looked forward to the new régime with the confident expectation of men who had at last obtained a lever to their wishes. The new Khedive, however, like many another heir apparent when he has succeeded to power, was not long in changing his opinions, and a month had hardly elapsed before he had forgotten his promises and betrayed his friends."—('Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt,' pp. 124-126.)

IV. Reformers and "Rebels."

Although the immediate cause of Ismail Pasha's deposition on 26th June, 1879, was Prince Bismarck's unexpected intervention in business that had for some time been left mainly in the hands of the British and French Governments, the ground for this intervention being Messrs. Rothschild's overwhelming appeal to the German Government for assistance in safeguarding their financial interests, Ismail's overthrow, sooner or later, had been rendered certain by his dismissal of Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières from his Cabinet. The

official view of the situation was set forth in a remarkable dispatch of Lord Salisbury's, dated 18th June, in which he explained the "reformed system of government" that had been adopted at the suggestion of the Commission of Inquiry :—

British Requirements.

"The essence of it was the creation of an independent Ministry, through whom and with whom the Khedive undertook to govern, and by which his own power should be balanced. The appointment of two European Ministers was a valuable portion of this arrangement, not only on account of the eminence of the two gentlemen selected, but also, and perhaps chiefly, because their presence in the Government appeared to be, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, an important security for that Ministerial independence which was the essence of the reform."

Not only "the essence of the reform," but its whole substance, "its be-all and its end-all," as understood by the British Government and the British agents in Cairo, was admittedly the procuring from the rulers and people of Egypt, by any and every method that could be devised, of money enough to satisfy the demands of the bondholders. Therefore, as Lord Salisbury acknowledged in the same dispatch, the expulsion of Nubar Pasha and his replacement by Sherif as nominal head of the Egyptian Government would have been forgiven had it not been for "the sudden and ignominious dismissal of the two European Ministers" which followed. According to Lord Salisbury's dispatch :—

"Nothing could indicate more clearly the Khedive's resolution to suffer the existence of no power that should balance his own than the mode in which he finally disposed of the remains of the Cabinet appointed in the autumn. They were not dismissed because he differed from the conclusions at which they had arrived, or because of any alleged misconduct. They were dismissed suddenly, because the Khedive disagreed with some financial proposals contained in an incomplete draft which Mr. Wilson had communicated to him confidentially, and simply for his information.....It has become evident that any further attempt on the part of the Powers to assist the Khedive in averting the consequences of his own misgovernment can have no other effect than to make them responsible for it in future. His power to frustrate all projects of reform and his resolve to use it have been sufficiently demonstrated by events."—('Egypt, No. 3, 1879,' pp. 10, 11.)

Six weeks earlier, the Khedive, who actually invited the Powers to revive the Dual Control, and offered to recognise Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières in that capacity, had given a different account of the position and of his objection to the reinstatement of those gentlemen in the Cabinet. "He was afraid," he said to Lord Vivian on 3rd May,

"that, considering all that had taken place, the proposal was not one that could be complied with. He would be prepared to submit to any control, however stringent it might be made, but not to the presence of foreigners in the Cabinet, who would certainly be regarded as having been imposed upon him." And the Prime Minister spoke more emphatically. Lord Vivian reported :—

Sherif's Reform Policy.

"I have since had an interview with Sherif Pasha, who declared to me that, while the apology for what had taken place concerned the Khedive, who was alone responsible for any offence towards the Powers or for the breach of any of the engagements into which he had entered, the question of the reinstatement of European Ministers was one for the consideration of the Cabinet, who were determined not to allow His Highness to agree to it, even if he should be inclined to do so. They would resign and leave the Khedive to his fate if he should yield in spite of them. He said that the principles upon which the new Ministry accepted office did not allow them to agree to the re-establishment of a system which had become odious after all that had occurred, although they were prepared to submit to the most stringent control that could be devised."—(*Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.)

It may be taken for granted, therefore—and this is the point which most concerns us here—that when Sherif and his colleagues accepted office under Ismail Pasha on 8th April, 1879, it was their intention, with the Khedive's sanction, to carry out a vigorous reforming policy, leaving the British, French, and other Powers in practically complete control over Egyptian finances, so far as these were hampered by obligations to the bondholders and their agents, but brooking no outside interference with the internal affairs of the country.

They went so far, indeed, in the way of compromise that they drafted, or at any rate agreed to, a Khedivial Decree, dated 23rd April, instituting a Council of State, in which the Prime Minister, as President, was to be assisted by two foreign Vice-Presidents, and in which four of the eight Councillors were to be foreigners, two out of four "Maîtres des Requêtes" being also foreigners. This body was "to consult upon all the projects of law which are to be submitted to the representatives of the nation, and require the sanction of the Khedive ; to prepare the projects of law and administrative regulations in cases in which the Government will give it the right of initiative ; to give advice on all questions of law and general interests, and upon all matters which the Council of Ministers may submit to it ; to settle any difficulties which may arise between the Ministers themselves ; to judge the acts of public

functionaries; and, lastly, to sit as an Administrative Tribunal." —('Egypt, No. 5, 1879,' p. 171.)

This formal, but of course ineffective, institution of a Council of State, in which, through their "men in possession," the European Powers and the bondholders protected by them could have considerably more than their legitimate right of interference in the government of Egypt, was manifestly intended to work with and help forward the reformed Chamber of Deputies, concerning which, as Sir Edward Malet said in a dispatch already cited, "a law had been elaborated during the last days of the reign of Ismail Pasha, under the Ministry of Sherif Pasha, giving a much wider scope to the powers of the Chamber," but which, he added, "had never received the Khedive's sanction."

It may be assumed that this early attempt on Sherif's part to bring about what may be called a "Parliamentary Reform Bill" for Egypt, about which detailed information is lacking, was in the main identical with the measure introduced by him in 1882, and that, along with proposals for widening and strengthening "the powers of the Chamber," it suggested arrangements for making the Chamber much more representative in its character than was the unsatisfactory organisation set up by Ismail in 1866, which, unsatisfactory as it was, proved itself too democratic and patriotic to be tolerated by Sir Rivers Wilson and his French comrade.

Tewfik's "Absolutism."

Whatever may have been the purport of Sherif's Reform Bill of 1879, however, Ismail Pasha had been deposed before it could be adopted, and the new Khedive, Tewfik, succumbing easily to the flatteries and more substantial allurements of his European masters, had broken away from his old instructors at El Azhar and the friends with whom he had worked during his father's lifetime. As a result, Sherif's loyalty to his convictions caused his downfall on 18th August. On the following day Mr. (now Sir Frank) Lascelles, Lord Vivian's *locum tenens*, reported to Lord Salisbury:—

"I called upon the Khedive, who told me that a project for a Constitution had been submitted to him by the late Cabinet, of which he disapproved as being inapplicable to the country. The Ministry had, in consequence, resigned, and His Highness had accepted their resignation.....The Khedive went on to say that he was aware it would be said that his action was an attempt to return to the old system of personal government. He could assure me that he had no wish to do so, but at present liberal institutions and popular representation were utterly unsuited to the country, and the

Constitution which had been submitted to him was nothing more than a 'décor de théâtre.' He hoped that in time the country would become fitted for parliamentary institutions, and therefore he proposed to make no change with regard to the Chamber of Delegates, which might eventually become a really representative body. He would also consider whether it would be advisable or not to establish a Council of State. He fully understood the responsibility he assumed by undertaking the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, but there was a great deal of important work to be done which, during the tenure of office of the late Cabinet, had been neglected, and His Highness, who was himself responsible for the government of the country, had determined to take his share of the labour, and not to shelter himself behind an unreal and illusory Constitution.

"On leaving the Khedive I called upon Sherif Pasha, who said that, although he was personally glad to be relieved from his duties, as, in consequence of the obstacles which had been put in his way, his position had become most difficult, as an Egyptian he regretted the return to personal power. There were many persons, both in and out of the Palace, who would be glad, for their own ends, to see the absolute power of the Khedive re-established, but it was a real misfortune for the country if it should again fall under the rule of an absolute sovereign."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1880,' p. 65.)

Such "personal government" as Tewfik Pasha was equal to, but Ismail Pasha was too anxious for "absolute government" to accept—that is, the arbitrary rule of British and French Controllers, using the Khedive as their puppet with assistance from a Law of Liquidation and other tyrannical enactments for which he was forced to make himself responsible—lasted for more than three years. It has, in fact, and except for a brief interval, lasted to this day, with the important modifications consequent on the abolition of the Dual Control and the establishment of British supremacy under the paramount guidance of a British Consul General. But the demand for Constitutional Reform, and some approach to Representative Government, was only silenced for a time by the excess of tyranny resorted to, and that excess of tyranny naturally conduced to its revival in sturdier shape than formerly within the next two years.

There is an ominous dearth of official information about the progress of events between 1879 and 1881, except as regards squabblings over arrangements for extorting money from the people under more and more serious difficulties. Ample evidence is furnished by the Blue books, however, as to the oppressions of which the fellaheen and others were victims; "the whip and bastinado being the necessary

concomitants of every demand for the payment of their taxes"; "comparativsly few persons being imprisoned for failing to pay their taxes, the use of the whip being found more expeditious and effective"; the village sheikhs, who "often sold the cattle, lands, and palm trees of some of the natives at very low prices without the knowledge of the owners," being "empowered by the Governors to deal with the natives as they thought best, provided they brought forth the money," and being "not interfered with, even if they paid over only a portion of the sums received and kept the rest themselves"; and so forth.—(*Ibid* pp. 19, 25, 118).

In all such persecutions the whole resources of Tewfik's "absolutism," backed up as it was by the British and French interest-collectors for the bondholders, and enforced in detail by Sherif Pasha's successor, Riaz Pasha, necessarily revived and intensified the wide-spread discontent which had been kept within bounds while there was hope of reforms being effected under Sherif's sympathetic leadership, but for which indignant protest afforded the only chance of remedy under Riaz. Perhaps it was merely by accident that this discontent asserted itself most vigorously, as it had already done in Ismail's time among the ranks of the army.

The Rise of Arabi.

The Egyptians employed in military service had special grievances, however, seeing that not only were the soldiers recruited by force from the native population at a disadvantage as regards payment for their work and other treatment, in comparison with the foreign mercenaries freely imported, but that also native officers were persistently sacrificed to the interests of Circassian and other favourites at Court. Mutinous feelings had been growing for years among the native born or fellah officers, winked at and practically encouraged by Ismail for his own purposes, long before the military disturbance in February, 1879, which led to Nubar's overthrow, and, though he was not personally engaged in that affair, Ahmed Arabi soon afterwards became the recognised leader of the movement. Born in 1840 and the son of a small village sheikh, Arabi had risen from the ranks and worked himself up to the position of a colonel before the close of 1880. He had also become a disciple of Jemal-ed-din and Mohammed Abdu, and an aggressive member of the Constitutional party directed by the reformers of the Azhar University. Early in 1881, he was in communication with two discontented members of the Riaz Pasha

Ministry, and even, it would seem, with the Khedive Tewfik, who was at this time, as at others, weakly scheming and plotting for deliverance from his bondage to the Dual Controllers and Riaz their tool.

"The Arrest of the Three Colonels."

"The arrest of the three colonels," as it was called, on 1st February, 1881, brought matters to a crisis, and established or confirmed Arabi in the position he was to hold for a year and a half as a great popular leader. Two or three weeks before, in conjunction with two other colonels and on behalf of their brother officers, Arabi presented to Riaz Pasha a statement of their grievances, which Riaz, after reading it, declared to be "a hanging matter." No hanging was at that stage seriously proposed, and the malcontents had the sympathy of Sir Edward Malet, who had succeeded Lord Vivian as Consul-General, and who wrote to Lord Granville on 23rd September:—

"It sprang from the comparative, or rather total, neglect of necessary reforms in the army.....The representations then made, instead of receiving due consideration, merely aroused the suspicions of the Government, and the officers who presented the petition were ultimately dealt with in a way calculated to destroy all confidence in the Khedive and the Government although it was in harmony with the traditions of Oriental statesmanship. They were instructed to come to the Ministry of War on the morning of 1st February, to join in settling the arrangements for the military procession which was to accompany one of the Princesses on the occasion of her marriage. It had been decided at a meeting of the Council, at which the Controllers were not present, that, on presenting themselves at the Ministry of War, the three petitioning colonels were to be arrested.

"The colonels, however, had wind of the design, and, before proceeding to the Ministry, left orders with their officers to come with their men and release them if they did not return within two hours. The colonels were arrested, and released by force. The Minister of War had to escape through the window and, a few hours later, was dismissed from office by the Khedive under compulsion of a riotous soldiery."—('Egypt, No. 3, 1882,' p. 28.)

Other conciliatory measures or promises followed, and the appointment of a Military Commission to deal effectively with the whole question and to aim at securing adequate reforms "had," according to Sir Edward Malet, "apparently brought about a good understanding, which found its expression in a speech of unexceptionable character made by Arabi Bey at a banquet at the Ministry of War at the end of April." But, as Sir Edward added, "the traditions of the days of Ismail stalked like a spectre across their path, and the colonels have

never been able to understand that, through the participation of the English and French Governments in the administration of the country, the possibility of a repetition of the crimes of those days has vanished." —(*Ibid*, p. 28).

That was a pretension that, throughout the past six-and-twenty years, others besides Egyptian patriots have been unable to understand or find either warrant or excuse for, and no one ought to be surprised that the national as well as the military discontent, after something like a lull for half a year, asserted itself much more vigorously than before in the military rising of 9th September, especially as Sir Edward Malet, in the naive dispatch already cited, acknowledged—in words appropriate to much more than the detail he referred to—that "it is a singular feature in the history of the movement that the Government was always in the dark as to the intentions of the colonels, and the colonels appear to have been thoroughly informed of every move of the Government."

Arabi's Coup d'État.

All that concerns us here, however, is the growth of the National movement, mainly under Arabi's guidance, which, though the European Controllers and Consuls were "always in the dark" about it, was growing rapidly between February and September, 1881, and, after being in full vigour for a year, was only crushed for a time by the British occupation consummated in September, 1882.

The result of the disturbance of 9th September, 1881, was that Arabi, at the head of some 2,500 soldiers of artillery, cavalry, and infantry, made what was virtually a willing capture of Tewfik Pasha and most of his Ministers, with the exception of Riaz Pasha. Thereupon, although the Acting British Consul-General and the British Controller objected, the first of the three demands submitted to the Khedive by Arabi—that Sherif Pasha should supersede Riaz as Prime Minister—was at once acceded to and acted upon ; and promises were as promptly made in respect of the other two—that is, the summoning of a representative Chamber and granting of a new Constitution, and the carrying out of the recommendations of the Military Commission as regards several reforms in the army. "The three months which followed this notable event," says Mr. Blunt, in his 'Secret History,' "were the happiest time, politically, that Egypt has ever known.....All classes were infected with the same happy spirit—Moslems, Christians, Jews, men of all religions

Its Sequel.

and races, including not a few Europeans of those at all intimately connected with native life. Even the foreign Consuls could not but confess that the new *régime* was better than the old, that Riaz had made mistakes, and that Arabi, if he had not been wholly right, had at least not been wholly wrong" (P. 152). That statement is at variance with the information of others, and even with other passages in Mr. Blunt's book. A great deal of "unhappiness" undoubtedly continued in Egypt, and Arabi's success provoked many jealousies and increased the alarm of many besides "the foreign Consuls." Sherif's return to office was naturally resented by all who had supported Riaz in his reactionary policy, especially by the Porte and its representatives in Egypt, and was only tolerated by the British agents on account of the readiness already shown by the new Prime Minister to submit to the wishes of the Dual Control, and to separate himself from the extreme views put forward by Arabi and the other reformers.

Sir Edward Malet, who visited Constantinople on his way back from a holiday in England, discussed the situation with the Sultan on 13th September. The proposal to grant a Constitution to Egypt, he reported, "was one, his Majesty said, which he could not concede; it was not possible for him to allow a Constitution in one province of his dominions and to withhold it from others." Reaching Cairo on 18th September, Sir Edward received from Sherif eager professions of friendship for England and opposition to Turkish interference, and also of opposition to the military faction that had restored him to office, although he still considered himself loyal to the Constitutional party. "He said," according to Sir Edward, "that it was his intention later on to convoke the Chamber of Notables, which he hoped would by degrees become the legitimate exponent of the wants of the country, and by this means deprive the army of the character which it had arrogated to itself in the late movement. He said that the Notables would be a representative body on which the Khedive and the Government would be able to lean for popular support against military dictation" ('Egypt, No. 3, 1882,' pp. 24, 26). So little reliance, however, was placed by Sir Edward on Sherif's professions, or at any rate on his competence to act up to them, that Earl Granville was asked to arrange for a British war-ship to be sent to Alexandria—a request that, when complied with after prolonged correspondence with the French Government and the Porte, rendered almost inevitable, and speedily resulted in, the bombardment of Alexandria in the following June, and all the turmoil ensuing.

Meanwhile Sir Edward Malet and the new British representative on the Dual Control, Sir Auckland Colvin, were, with or without fair excuse, losing any sympathy they may formerly have felt for the Constitutional Reformers, of whom Sherif had been one of the more moderate before Arabi came to be their leader. The dispatch to Lord Granville, dated 2nd October, which has been quoted from on an earlier page, shows the animus that was even then at fever heat in the minds of Sir Edward and his colleagues. They brought about the virtual expulsion of Arabi from Cairo, where he was using his influence with the army to secure, before the promised convocation of the Chamber of Notables, "the adoption of a law giving a much wider scope to the powers of the Chamber, which had been elaborated during the last days of Ismail." And, the assembling of a Chamber of Notables of some sort being unavoidable, they contrived that it should be merely a revival of the very inadequate body initiated by Ismail sixteen years before, and hitherto much more serviceable in strengthening tyranny than in procuring reforms. For all that, the Chamber, when it met in accordance with "forms and conditions," as Sherif admitted, "no longer in harmony with the aspirations of the country," proved itself far more patriotic than Sir Edward Malet or Sir Auckland Colvin expected or could allow.

The 1882 Chamber of Notables.

In issuing the decree authorising the election of delegates for the Chamber and fixing 23rd December as its first day of meeting, Sherif sought to conciliate the Consuls and Controllers by declaring that "the conventions and institutions in force, created by the financial situation, cannot be discussed by the Chamber, any more than the laws and decrees which render them binding, they being the outcome of international engagements which cannot be modified in any way without the assent of the Powers who were contracting parties to them," and that "the Chamber will fulfil its mission without injuring interests which must be respected." His statement of the subjects that the Chamber would be invited and permitted to deal with, though modest enough, indicated the zeal and thoroughness of his and his Government's intentions. On 4th October he wrote:—

"My colleagues and I will devote the next three months to preparing the proposals which we shall submit to the examination of the delegates, especially calling their attention to the claims connected with taxation, to forced labour, and to loans for public works, which is a matter of such pressing interest for our agricultural population. We shall consult them

also on the institution of provincial councils. They are, so to speak, in constant and direct relationship with the soil and with its inhabitants, and their knowledge of local interests will be particularly valuable for studying the organisation and functions of these councils."—('Egypt No. 3, 1882,' p. 61.)

Before the opening of the Chamber (the actual date being 26th December) there was much brewing of trouble. Certain outspoken articles—which, however, if the extracts published in the Blue-books are fair specimens, were by no means outrageous—having appeared in the recently started Nationalist journals, a despotic Press Law was insisted on by the European Controllers and issued as a Khedivial Decree. The Government having asked the Controllers to allow enough money to be spent in effecting the reforms in the army which Sir Edward Malet had recognised as absolutely necessary, and in raising its strength to the level admitted to be requisite, Sherif was warned that no such extravagance would be tolerated. Everything that could be was done to alienate Sherif and his fellow-Ministers from Arabi, and to drive Arabi and his immediate following into courses that could be represented as inimical to European interests.

If British representatives took the lead in browbeating the Egyptians in their own country, moreover, it was from Paris that, at this time, the tyrannical tactics were liveliest. On 15th December, Lord Lyons reported to Lord Granville that, in an interview with M. Gambetta :—

"He observed that the approach of the meeting of the Chamber of Notables at Cairo made him uneasy. It was, he said, impossible to foresee what line they would take. They might be moderate, support the Khedive's authority, and assist the Government in carrying into effect useful and practical measures. It was, on the other hand, quite as probable that they might make common cause with the colonels, and insist upon the adoption of the reactionary and anti-European schemes of the so-called National party. It might be taken for granted that they would be beset by intrigues proceeding from Constantinople, as well as from Egypt itself. They might weaken or even upset altogether the authority of Tewfik Pasha. They might admit or even invite the active interposition of the Porte. In short, their meeting might put an end to the present tranquility, and be the signal for a fresh and more serious crisis than that which has recently been tided over.

"In this state of things M. Gambetta thought it would be prudent for the French and English Governments to consult with each other on the course to be taken by them in common, in the face of certain not improbable events. The first and most important thing was that the two Governments should not only be perfectly united, but should make their union unmistakably apparent, both to their friends and to their adversaries in Egypt. If any one could

contrive to get his little finger in between France and England in Egyptian matters, there would be an end to all the good the Powers had done or might do in Egypt—nay, there would be an end to the co-operation of the two Powers throughout the world, which might confer so much benefit on mankind."—('Egypt, No. 5, 1882,' p. 21.)

There we have revealed to us the genesis of the Dual Note, which was not presented formally till 6th January, 1882, but the purport of which had been communicated, and backed up in divers ways, before the opening of the Chamber. The Chamber, therefore, started its proceedings, and conducted them until it was dissolved, under wholly inexcusable intimidation and coercion, and, considering its quandary, its action appears to have been highly creditable to it. A week having been occupied with necessary preliminaries, it proceeded to discuss a series of new rules for the organisation of the Chamber which had been adopted by the Council of Ministers on 31st December, and which were doubtless based on the abortive proposals of Sherif in 1879. This draft Constitution was only agreed to, however, after a month had been spent in discussions within the Chamber, and in graver disputes between the Chamber and the Consuls and Controllers, which caused the document to be ineffective. Its chief importance, in fact, is in its evidence of the self-governing capacity—in the matter of constructive theorising, at any rate—of a body of Egyptian politicians brought together in most unfavourable circumstances and exposed, while they were deliberating, to the most potent threats and the subtlest wiles that experts in European diplomacy, backed up by overwhelming force, could employ.

This document will be dealt with hereafter. At present it may be sufficient to call attention to a momentous quarrel growing out of it. Sir Edward Malet appears to have seen little or no harm in the original draft of the scheme when he transmitted a copy of it to Earl Granville on 2nd January, 1882, with the following remark :—

The Organic Law and Budget Difficulties.

"Your Lordship will observe that guarantees are given in these regulations for the observance of the duties of Egypt towards foreign Powers. With the exception of these restrictions, the Constitution is extremely liberal, and there is little doubt that, as time goes on, further changes in a liberal direction will be made."

On 10th January, however, Sir Edward thus telegraphed to the Foreign Office :—

"Article 31 of the new Organic Law of the Chamber authorises the Chamber to express opinions on the Budget. The Budget has two sections

—one devoted to revenues assigned to the Public Debt, the other to revenues not specially assigned. The Chamber insists on the right of voting the latter. Sherif Pasha and the Controllers consider that, if the Chamber acquires this right, the Council, and therefore the Controllers, lose their hold on the finances."

To which Lord Granville replied on 11th January :—

"Her Majesty's Government do not wish to commit themselves to a total or permanent exclusion of the Chamber of Notables from handling the Budget. Caution, however, will be required in dealing with it, regard being had to the pecuniary interests on behalf of which Her Majesty's Government have been acting."

Next day his Lordship telegraphed by way of postscript :—

"I should be glad to have a report from you by telegraph as to what will be the precise effect if the Notables obtain the power over the finances claimed by them."

The report, dated 13th January, was as follows :—

"The sanction or rejection of any part of the Budget of unassigned resources, receipts or expenditure would rest with the Chamber, which, however, by Article 32 of the draft Organic Law, cannot discuss the Tribute, the service of the Public Debt, or any charges arising from the Law of Liquidation or International Conventions. Official salaries, not regulated by contract, would be under the control of the Chamber ; so that it would be able to abolish the land survey, which is the result of no international engagement, and to dismiss many Europeans in the Administration."

From this instructive correspondence it is clear that, after they had had a week or more in which to study the proposed Egyptian Constitution, neither the British Government nor its representatives in Cairo saw anything to object to in the project, except in so far as it afforded opportunity for interference by the Chamber with "official salaries" paid to recipients not safeguarded by treaty obligations, and might lead to the dismissal of "many Europeans in the Administration" holding their offices as nominees of the Khedive in his capacity of puppet to the Consuls and Controllers, not by virtue of his headship over a Constitutional Monarchy.

Gambetta's Interference.

The British Government and its representatives in Cairo, moreover, were, to say the least, urged on in taking up this discreditable and mischievous attitude by the French Government, whose Dual Note had been signed by Earl Granville, after much hesitation, on 6th January. On the 12th, Lord Lyons, British Ambassador in Paris, wrote to Earl Granville :—

"During an interview which I had with him this afternoon, M. Gambetta introduced the subject of Egypt, apparently for the purpose of expressing a very strong objection to any interference at all by the Egyptian Chamber with the Budget. He said that it behoved France and England to be very firm, lest any appearance of vacillation on their part should encourage the pretensions of the Notables to lay their hands on the Budget; and he argued that their touching the Budget must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the arrangement made by the Liquidation Commission, to the subversion of the French and English Control, and to the ruin of the Egyptian finances. Finally, M. Gambetta expressed his conviction that any explanation of the joint communication of the two Governments would serve to swell the arrogance of the opponents of France and England, and encourage them in their designs upon the Budget."

M. Gambetta was doubtless discreet in deprecating any public "explanation" of the browbeating policy he insisted upon—more, of course, because he deemed it necessary to the success of the policy he was then pursuing in Tunis, and its bearings on European politics in general, than because he had special sympathy with the European office-holders in Egypt, or even with the European bondholders. But no "explanation," probably, could have made more vigorous either the "arrogance" of the Egyptian patriots or their zeal in seeking to save their country from further spoliation and to secure for it the prime essential of national independence. Sir Edward Malet had good grounds for the warning he addressed to Earl Granville in a dispatch written on 11th January, five days before he was ordered from the Foreign Office to act at all hazards in accordance with M. Gambetta's wishes. Having already notified that Sherif had been brought over by the Controllers to agreement with their views, Sir Edward said:—

"Sherif Pasha and the Controllers General are of opinion that, if the Chamber is to have the right of voting the Budget, the Council of Ministers, and, therefore, the Control, will lose all hold over the finances. It is possible that the Chamber, if it possessed the right, might use it with moderation and good sense; but it would be a leap in the dark to confide the power to it before it has, in other matters, proved its political capacity.

"On the other hand, the Chamber exists, and will continue to do so until it is forcibly suppressed, which can only be done by intervention, and this is a last resource which the possible eventuality of the infraction of the Law of Liquidation would in no way justify.

"It is not impossible that the breach which has thus been created between Sherif Pasha and the Chamber may, if not avoided, ultimately cause His Excellency's resignation; in which case the present Minister of War

would be the popular candidate of the National party for the Presidency of the Council. But, supposing the Khedive names a Minister who comes into office on a point on which he at once finds himself at variance with the Controllers, the situation becomes extremely difficult. I confess, that, rather than that this situation should supervene, I should prefer to give the Chamber the right, and to wait till this right is abused before interfering.

"It must be borne in mind that the Egyptians have distinctly, for good or for evil, entered on a constitutional path; that the Organic Law of the Chamber is their Charter of Liberties."—('Egypt, No. 5, 1882,' pp. 39, 44, 45, 48, 49.)

Sir Edward's predictions were partly realised. The Chamber insisted on having control over the portion of the Budget which dealt exclusively with Egyptian affairs, and, Sherif having been forced to resign on 2nd February, a new Ministry was formed on the 5th, under the Presidency of Mahmud Pasha Sami, one of the oldest and staunchest of the Nationalists who drew their inspiration from Jemal-ed-din, and War Minister in Sherif's Cabinet. Arabi, who had previously been Under-Secretary for War, succeeded to the more responsible post, and used it perforce in making such preparations as he could for meeting the armed intervention openly threatened by less responsible champions of European interests in Egypt, if not as yet by the Governments and their representatives on the spot.

The Khedivial Decree, embodying the Organic Law proposed by Sherif Pasha with several alterations, was issued on 7th February, and on the next day was also issued an Electoral Law, completing the scheme of Constitutional Reform put forward by the National Ministery. —('Egypt, No. 7, 1882,' pp. 23, 65.) No effect could be given, however, to the second of these measures of primary importance or to others of lesser value to which the members paid as much attention as was possible in the now steadily increasing turmoil preliminary to the inevitable crisis which resulted in the British occupation. The Chamber was closed without ceremony on 26th March, and on 27th May Mahmud Sami and his colleagues resigned their posts as Ministers of the Khedive by way of final protest against his acceptance of the conditions imposed upon him by England and France in their Dual Note of 6th January.

But at an earlier date what is described as the Military Dictatorship of Arabi, had begun, and, all efforts at any sort of Constitutional Reform being in abeyance, no account need here be given of proceedings in which, whatever may have been his qualities as a patriot, Arabi showed himself to be deplorably lacking in statesmanship, and in which the

share taken by Great Britain, whatever its statesmanship, cannot be looked back upon with satisfaction by any who are mindful of their country's honour. Mr. Blunt, who took the lead, among Englishmen, in protesting against the treatment of the Egyptians in those days, quotes a letter he received from Mr. John Morley near the end of January, 1882, in which the latter said, with cynical truth, "Egypt, unluckily for its people, is the battlefield of European rivalries, and an honest settlement in the interests of its population will be prevented to suit the convenience of France. I don't see any way out of it. It is that curse of the world, *la haute politique*, which will spoil everything."—('Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt,' p. 200.)

"La Haute Politique."

A worse curse than the overthrow of Arabi might have befallen Egypt, for, whatever were the capacities and possibilities as a patriotic reformer with which he started, his chances of honourable success and his country's prospects of speedy advantage from the system of constitutional government adapted at his dictation from Sherif Pasha's project in 1882 had been spoilt before Egypt was occupied by British troops in the same year, and many financial and other reforms and innovations that the people were not in a condition to work out for themselves, and could not elsewhere have obtained, were consequent on the British occupation.

But the political institutions that the Egyptians supposed to be within their reach, if not actually possessed by them, were wrecked. Lord Milner is by no means the only influential Englishman who, with or without official experience to offer as excuse for his opinion, has not been ashamed to complain openly that the British Government did not in 1882 break faith with the Egyptian people and the European Powers much more completely than it did, and, being then "in absolute possession of the country," did not at once "elect for the right of might," and either annex it outright or "proclaim a protectorate." As he frankly puts it:—

"It is true that even the proclamation of a protectorate would have been very little in keeping with the professions under cover of which we sent out our military expedition. But the fulfilment of the professions made by a nation in the act of going to war is not in common human practice—whatever ought to be the case in an ideal world—apt to be rigidly exacted of the same nation at the moment of victory. In the heat and flurry of a resort to arms, and under the natural impulse to justify so extreme a measure, much

is always promised which, even if intended, it is afterwards found impossible to perform; and such non-performance is, within reasonable limits, readily condoned by the public opinion of mankind."—('England in Egypt,' p. 26.)

As Lord Milner has satisfaction, however, in declaring, the fraudulent desires of the would-be annexationists have been substantially achieved by the "veiled protectorate" which he had a share in building up. As a consequence, the Egyptians have already been kept waiting a quarter of a century for the yet better and more liberal institutions promised to them when Lord Dufferin was sent out to devise measures for making them masters of their own affairs on "a basis affording satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity."

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